



The President's Daily Brief

1 June 1970

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Many Cambodians are unhappy about the presence of South Vietnamese troops in their country. (Page 1)

Israeli forces are active on all fronts. (Page 3)

Gromyko will talk with the French about a number of things. (Page 4)

Laos continues to be quiet. (Page 5)

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CAMBODIA

[redacted] a dispute between those who strongly oppose the use of South Vietnamese troops and those who regard it as an unfortunate necessity of war. The disputants are junior army officers and civilian bureaucrats. Both factions are laboring to drive a wedge between Lon Nol and Matak, but thus far the two leaders have not been drawn openly into the dispute.

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Cambodian nationalists outside government circles have also been irked by the use of South Vietnamese troops and Phnom Penh's efforts to establish close relations with Saigon. [redacted]

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[redacted] a Cambodian nationalist group that heretofore has been strongly behind Lon Nol put up anti-Vietnamese posters in the capital. The group also complained directly to Lon Nol. [redacted]

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[redacted] that although certain "progressive intellectual" elements were less rigid in their opposition to the use of South Vietnamese troops, they too were against such troops remaining in Cambodia after 30 June.

Military expediency has caused Lon Nol to rely heavily on the South Vietnamese, but he is also sympathetic to the protests.

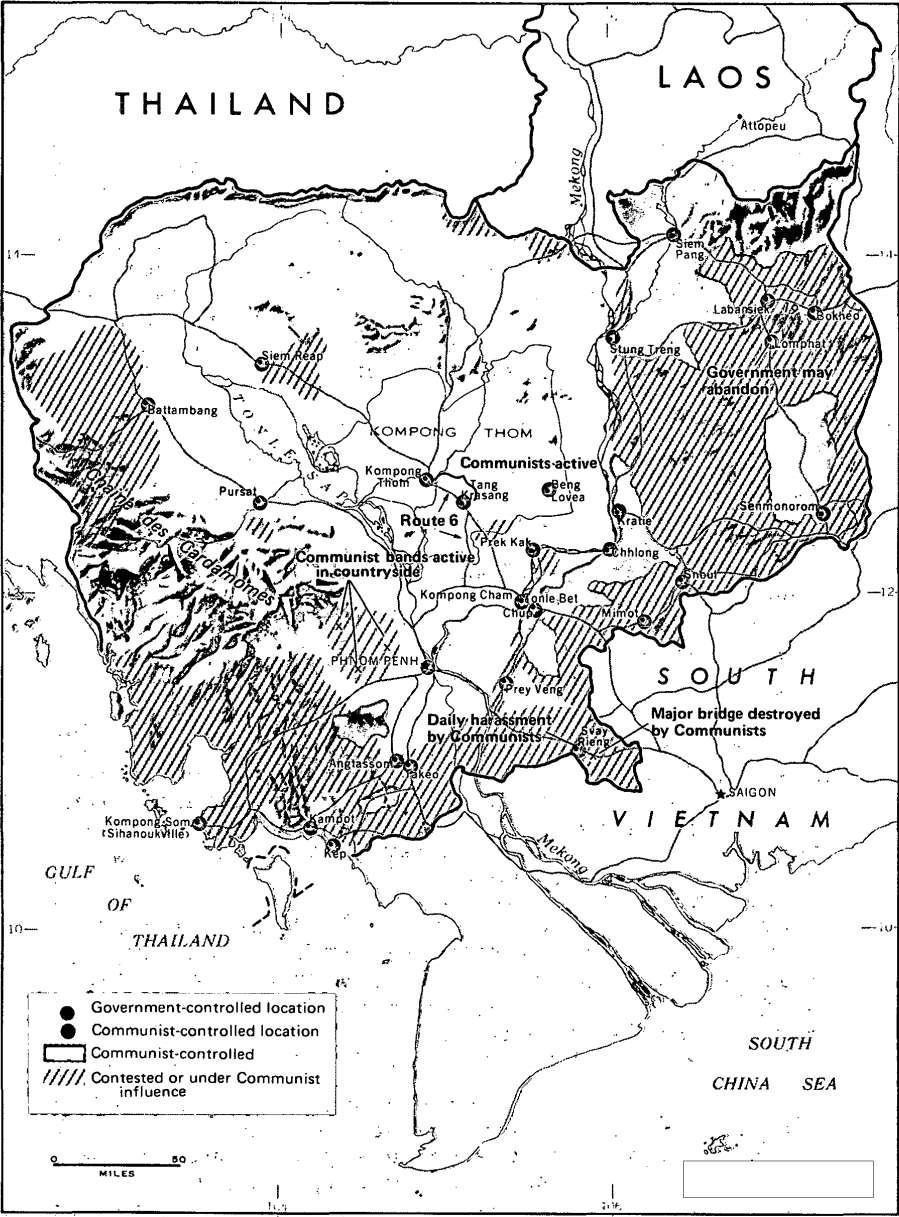
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Prey Veng town has been recaptured by South Vietnamese and Cambodian units, but the Communists are continuing to hit them with mortar fire. South Vietnamese troops are sweeping west of the town toward the Mekong River. Farther south, the Communists continue to harass Svay Rieng town. They have destroyed a large bridge on the road connecting Svay Rieng with South Vietnam--thus demonstrating that they retain significant strength in the Parrot's Beak area in spite of extensive South Vietnamese operations.

(continued)

Cambodia: Current Situation



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The anticipated attack against Kompong Thom city has not yet materialized, but the Communists appear to be extending their control over Route 6. Cambodian officers fear that the Communists may move south and cut the land access between Phnom Penh and Kompong Cham city.

[redacted] that South Vietnamese troops have been requested to help secure Route 6.

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According to intercepted Cambodian messages, several large Cambodian Communist bands have become active in the countryside west of Phnom Penh. One group has destroyed bridges on a rural road some 30 miles west of the capital.

These groups pose no threat to the capital, but they may be attempting to isolate Phnom Penh from areas to the west. It is also possible that they may have begun establishing lines of communication from their bases in the foothills of the Cardamom mountains to the encampments of the Vietnamese Communist forces in Kompong Thom Province.

The government may abandon the town of Lomphat, one of its three remaining major outposts in the northeast, although heavy allied air strikes have eased the pressure somewhat. If the two battalions there pull out, they will be sent north to help defend Labansiek, which lies astride the principal road to the South Vietnamese border.

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ISRAEL - ARAB STATES

Over the week end, Israel continued its bombing of Egyptian positions immediately west of the Canal. On Friday, Israeli planes hit again at the Egyptian port of Safaga in the Gulf of Suez. Egypt responded with air strikes, artillery barrages, and two cross-canal raids which resulted in the deaths of at least 13 Israeli soldiers. Cairo claims to have shot down two Israeli planes.

Israeli patrols continued to cross the border into southern Lebanon, and Israeli artillery began sporadic shelling into the area to harass fedayeen concentrations. According to a press report, villagers there have clashed with the commandos in an effort to prevent them from firing into Israeli settlements. Interior Minister Jumblatt appears to be softening the government's ban on the carrying of arms by the Palestinians. In a press statement he said the ban only applied to those Palestinians who are unable to prove their membership in a fedayeen organization.

Jordanian and Israeli artillery engaged in several duels along the cease-fire line, but no assessment of damages or casualties, if any, is yet available. An Israeli infantry patrol claimed it killed 11 Arab guerrillas in the northern Jordan Valley on 28 May, and two Israeli soldiers died in another clash on 31 May.

On the political front, a conference of Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, and possibly Sudan and Libya, is scheduled for 5 June in Cairo. Libyan chief of state Qaddafi, now in Baghdad, is continuing his tour to drum up more unified Arab action against Israel. Palestinian guerrilla leaders are in Cairo attempting to create a more unified command structure within the framework of the Palestinian Liberation Organization.

Arab leaders reacted negatively to Mrs. Meir's "acceptance" of the November 1967 UN Security Council resolution. They regard her speech as a "new US-Israeli maneuver." In Khartoum, Nasir again called for complete Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories as the only way to peace.

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FRANCE-USSR

Gromyko arrived in Paris today for wide-ranging discussions with France's highest officials. Although the French have described the visit as "completely routine," the Quai anticipates discussions underscoring France's independent attitudes on current international topics.

The talks probably will cover European security, problems of the Middle East and Southeast Asia, French plans to buy natural gas from the Soviets, and French consideration of proposals to build a truck plant in the USSR. Beginning talks on these topics will lay the groundwork for more detailed discussions when French President Pompidou visits the Soviet Union, probably in the fall.

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NOTE

Laos: No major fighting was reported over the week end. In the north, Vang Pao's drive toward Ban Na continues to be thwarted by well-entrenched North Vietnamese troops, but government guerrillas have been meeting only light resistance as they re-take positions near the Bouam Long base north of the Plaine des Jarres. In southern Laos, government forces have had some success in clearing Communist elements from the eastern edge of the Bolovens Plateau, but the area is not yet secure.

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